

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 020228

FOR AMBASSADOR AND CHARGE FROM DUBS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SWEL, AF, PK, US

SUBJECT POSSIBLE U.S.-SOVIET HEALTH COOPERATION IN
AFHANISTAN AND KABUL

1. SET FORTH BELOW ARE PERTINENT SECTIONS OF A MEMO-
RANDUM DISCUSSING POSSIBILITIES OF U.S.-SOVIET HEALTH
COOPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND BANGLADESH. THE MEMORANDUM
LISTS SEVERAL CONDITIONS WHICH SHOULD BE MET IF ANY
PROPOSAL FOR JOINT COOPERATION IS TO BE SERIOUSLY CON-
SIDERED AND CARRIED OUT. BEARING THESE CONDITIONS IN MIND,
WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR REACTIONS AND FRANK COMMENTS ON
THE MEMORANDUM BY OPENING OF BUSINESS HERE IN WASHINGTON
ON JANUARY 30.

2. QUOTE: SUBJECT: US-SOVIET HEALTH COOPERATION IN THE
DEVELOPING WORLD.
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A. U.S. INITIATIVE.

THE INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR US-SOVIET
AFFAIRS (ICCUSA) IS COORDINATING THE NEXT STEPS OF THE US
INITIATIVE EARLIER APPROVED BY THE WHITE HOUSE TO ENGAGE
THE SOVIETS IN JOINT HEALTH COOPERATION BENEFITING THE

DEVELOPING WORLD. SPECIFICALLY, IT IS NECESSARY TO PREPARE

GUIDANCE FOR THE US POSITION IN PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIETS AT A MEETING TO BE CONVENED BY WHO IN GENEVA IN FEBRUARY.

B. BACKGROUND.

SINCE THE SPRING OF 1977, SEVERAL INTERAGENCY DISCUSSIONS HAVE REFINED THE CONCEPT OF INITIATING US-SOVIET COOPERATION ON HEALTH PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. IN BROADEST TERMS, OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO FURTHER ENGAGE THE SOVIETS IN COOPERATION ON HUMAN NEEDS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD, A GOAL ADVANCED BY THE PRESIDENT IN HIS CHARLESTON SPEECH OF JULY 21, 1977. ANY SPECIFIC FORM OF COOPERATION CHOSEN IN THE HEALTH AREA SHOULD ALSO BE CONSISTENT WITH WHO PROGRAMS, PROVIDE TANGIBLE BENEFIT TO RECIPIENT COUNTRIES, AND, IDEALLY, ESTABLISH MECHANISMS FOR US-SOVIET INTERACTION THAT MAY BE BUILT ON IN THE FUTURE.

THE SOVIETS HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SUCH COOPERATION. IN SEPTEMBER 1977 AT DR. BRZEZINSKI'S DIRECTION, THE STATE DEPARTMENT ADVISED THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON OF OUR SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT OF A JOINT HEALTH INITIATIVE AND REQUESTED SOVIET REACTION. DR. BOURNE AND HEW OFFICIALS HAVE ALSO HAD INFORMAL

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PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH SOVIET HEALTH OFFICIALS. THE SOVIET ATTITUDE HAS BEEN GENERALLY POSITIVE BUT CIRCUMSCRIBED BY THEIR UNCERTAINTY AS TO SPECIFICS AND AN EVIDENT DESIRE TO PROCEED ONLY IN A WHO FRAMEWORK.

AN INFORMAL US QUERY HAS ALSO BEEN MADE TO WHO. DIRECTOR GENERAL MAHLER EXPRESSED WARM SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA, PROPOSING TO CONVENE A MEETING ON THE SUBJECT TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITIES WITH WHO. WE EXPECT THAT HE WILL ISSUE INVITATIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO US AND SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES FOR TALKS TO BE HELD IN GENEVA IN FEBRUARY. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THESE DISCUSSIONS WILL BE EXPLORATORY IN NATURE AND THAT NONE OF THE THREE PARTICIPANTS WILL BE PREPARED TO MAKE COMMITMENTS.

US OBJECTIVES AT THE GENEVA MEETING WOULD BE:

-- TO CONFIRM THE AGREEMENTS IN PRINCIPLE EARLIER EXPRESSED BY THE OTHER PARTIES AND TO ESTABLISH A FORUM FOR CONTINUED DISCUSSION;

-- TO ELICIT VIEWS OF THE OTHER PARTIES AND ENCOURAGE

THEIR CONSIDERATION OF CONCRETE STEPS TO ADVANCE TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION;

-- TO EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR A COOPERATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS THAT MAY LATER BE AGREED, INCLUDING POSSIBLE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE THREE PARTIES; AND

-- TO BEGIN IDENTIFICATION OF FEASIBLE MODES OF COOPERATION AND CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE RECIPIENT COUNTRIES AS A BASIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION IF WARRANTED.

C. U.S. POSTURE AT TALKS.

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THE US WOULD BE FLEXIBLE AND OPEN-MINDED ON MODES AND CONTENT OF POSSIBLE JOINT PROJECTS. OUR INTERESTS, HOWEVER, REQUIRE THAT ANY PROPOSAL SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION MUST MEET SEVERAL CONDITIONS:

-- THERE SHOULD BE AN EQUAL BALANCE BETWEEN US AND SOVIET INPUTS;

-- ANY PROJECT SHOULD RESPOND TO A CLEAR NEED AND HAVE REASONABLE PROMISE OF SUCCESS; AND

-- US POLITICAL INTERESTS, AS WELL AS THOSE OF OUR ALLIES AND OF PROJECT COUNTRIES, SHOULD NOT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED

IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIALLY FEASIBLE PROJECTS WILL OF COURSE HAVE TO BE DISTILLED FROM THE INPUTS OF ALL THREE PARTIES AS DISCUSSION PROGRESSES. IN ORDER TO MOVE AT GENEVA BEYOND THE PLANE OF ABSTRACT CONSIDERATIONS, WE PLAN TO MAKE BRIEF PRESENTATIONS ON ILLUSTRATIVE FUNCTIONAL PROGRAM AREAS AND POSSIBLE RECIPIENT COUNTRIES WHICH WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS IN MORE DETAIL AT FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS OF EXPERTS. WE WOULD SUGGEST:

(1) ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAMS: JOINT RESEARCH ON A SPECIFIC DISEASE OR HEALTH PROBLEM; MALARIA REDUCTION OR MASS IMMUNIZATION; DEVELOPMENT OF LOW-COST HEALTH DELIVERY SYSTEMS; JOINT SUPPLY OF A HOSPITAL OR SIMILAR HEALTH INSTITUTION; WATER POLLUTION ABATEMENT; AND PARAMEDICAL TRAINING. THERE ARE SEVERAL OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF EACH OF THESE PROPOSALS, RANGING FROM A FULLY INTEGRATED JOINT EFFORT TO SUCH ARRANGEMENTS AS ONE SIDE PROVIDING EQUIPMENT OR MATERIAL, THE OTHER TECHNICAL

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ASSISTANCE. SELECTION OF ONE OR MORE PROGRAMS WOULD OF COURSE HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY MATCHED WITH CIRCUMSTANCES APPLYING TO ANY GIVEN RECIPIENT COUNTRY.

(2) POSSIBLE COUNTRIES: MALI, AFGHANISTAN, AND BANGLADESH. THE MAIN CRITERIA FOR THEIR INCLUSION AS PUTATIVE RECIPIENTS ARE: EXISTENCE OF PRESSING HEALTH PROBLEMS; AN ESTABLISHED PRESENCE OF BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE US, INCLUDING A USAID MISSION; AND A REASONABLE PROBABILITY THAT POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS CAN BE KEPT MANAGEABLE THROUGH JUDICIOUS HANDLING AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF WHO.

SINCE THE DISCUSSIONS AT GENEVA WILL BE EXPLORATORY ONLY, WE WOULD NOT PLAN TO APPROACH ANY POTENTIAL RECIPIENT COUNTRY AT THIS TIME. AT LATER STAGES, ANY COUNTRY INVOLVED WOULD BE INFORMALLY CONSULTED TO DETERMINE RECEPTIVITY BEFORE AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IS ISSUED.

D. ADVANCE INTERNAL US PREPARATIONS.

PENDING ANY LATER RECEIPT OF WHO AND SOVIET PROPOSALS ON DELEGATION COMPOSITION, WE WOULD EXPECT THE US DELEGATION TO INCLUDE DR. BOURNE AS CHAIRMAN, WITH REPRESENTATION FROM STATE, HEW, AND AID. FURTHER INTERAGENCY DISCUSSION WOULD BE HELD TO ELABORATE THE BASIC LINES NOTED ABOVE, DRAWING ON AGENCY COMMENTS AND IDEAS PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED. AT APPROPRIATE POINTS WE WILL ALSO WISH TO KEEP CONGRESS INFORMED THROUGH RELEVANT COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF. UNQUOTE.
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